

FLORIDA

HOMES AND TRAVEL

November 2005

Open For Business

We have been extremely busy over the summer here at Florida Homes And Travel "headquarters" preparing for our new venture. After a lot of hard work, we are proud to announce the opening of our Travel Agency. We have been granted an ATOL license by the Civil Aviation Authority (ATOL 6927) which can be viewed on their website www.atol.org.uk, to offer you complete protection when purchasing travel products from us. As there is often slight confusion about ATOL, ABTA and IATA, and what they all mean here is an explanation taken from the CAA ATOL web site: An Air Travel Organisers Licence protects the traveller from losing money or being stranded abroad when a tour operator goes out of business. All licensed firms have to lodge bonds with the CAA so that if they go out of business, the CAA can give refunds to people who can't travel and arrange for people abroad to finish their holidays and fly home. Remember that ATOL is the *only* protection scheme for flights and air holidays sold by tour operators in the UK. Some trade bodies - like ABTA - have their own financial protection systems, but these concentrate on non-air holidays such as coach and ferry packages and on protection against travel agent failure. If you are booking a flight or an air holiday from a tour operator, you must be covered by ATOL to ensure protection. ATOL won't protect you if you book direct with an airline, or if you get an air ticket from an IATA travel agency as soon as you pay. In this event, your contract will be with the airline, which should honour your ticket even if the agent goes out of business. Finally, ATOL may not protect you if you aren't in the UK when you make your booking. We look forward to helping subscribers and guests with their travel arrangements. Please call us on 0500 50 50 87 for an up to date quote.

The Brady Campaign – A Reply

On October 1st a new law, passed in this year's legislative session, hit headlines around the world. The "Stand Your Ground" law was passed without too much fanfare, more with an element of surprise - because most Floridians were unaware that hitherto they had a "duty to retreat" from a potentially violent incident. As we went to press last month, we missed mentioning the law due to pressures of space, but within days the story was in the news thanks to the efforts of the anti-gun Brady Campaign which has been handing out leaflets to tourists at major airports on arrival in Florida urging visitors not to engage in conflict with residents. One more thing for the tourism industry to deal with along with hurricanes and red-tide. We publish here the official response from Visit Florida to the Campaign in case you need to reassure guests:

Florida is a very safe and secure destination that excels in caring for its visitors. On any given day, Florida hosts a million visitors. In 2004, Florida welcomed 79.7 million visitors, a record for the state. Florida has a low crime rate. In fact, it's at a 34-year low and has been falling for 13 consecutive years. (2004 Florida Annual Uniform Crime Report.) We believe that our visitors are wise enough to understand that the Brady Campaign is one group's political agenda and not a real safety issue. It is a scare tactic campaign, not an education campaign as stated. In 1987, the same group predicted that the gun permit law passed in Florida that year would increase gun violence. This increase in violence never occurred. A change in a law does not necessarily create a change in behavior.

Statement From Florida's Office of the Attorney General:

"Along with VISIT FLORIDA, we welcome visitors to the sunshine state with open arms and make their enjoyment and safety a top priority," said Florida's Attorney General Charlie Crist. "Florida is a very safe and secure destination and our leaders continually strive to enhance the personal safety of the nearly 80 million global visitors who travel here annually." He added, "The new Florida law that groups are using to raise visibility for their political agenda already exists in at least 26 states throughout the country allowing you to protect yourself if attacked. Some groups are assuming that the average Florida citizen will change their behavior in a negative manner in response to this law. In reality, law enforcement and the courts are not going to allow this to happen."

Statement from Gary Kleck, Ph.D., Criminology and Criminal Justice:

"There is no evidence at all that this sort of law results in people using unjustified force in self-defense. The Brady Campaign has always been hostile to self-defense in general and would like the Florida legislature to reverse their position. The group is trying to hold the tourism industry hostage to further their purposes," said Dr. Kleck

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Florida Visitor Trends 2004

Every year Visit Florida, the official tourism body for the State of Florida, gathers information on the trends of visitors in and around the state – whether they are international, domestic or even resident travellers. The information can be useful to homeowners to see what objectives tourists have, and to which market to target ones property. We have given particular focus to British Tourists in our analysis this month, as our Annual Property Management survey showed that 67% of subscriber's guests are from the UK. The results do not always follow the perceived wisdom – as illustrated by the number of visitors who chose Golf as an activity.

British Travellers:

Main Trip Purpose	
Leisure/Recreation/Holiday	87.00%
Visit Friends/Relatives	8.20%
Business/Professional	3.70%
Convention/Conference	0.70%
Other	0.60%

Travel Party Composition	
<i>Travelling without Children</i>	65.70%
One Adult	21.00%
Two Adults	37.00%
Three Adults	3.00%
Four or More Adults	4.40%
Average Adult Party Size	1.9
<i>Travelling with Children</i>	34.30%
Average Party Size	4.2

Age of Adult Traveler	
18-24 years	5.60%
25-34 years	14.50%
35-44 years	37.20%
45-54 years	22.80%
55-64 years	14.20%
65+ years	5.90%
Median Age	43

Overall Nights in Destination *	
<i>Britons staying only in Florida</i>	87.40%
Average Nights	13.30
<i>All British Visitors</i>	100.00%
Average Nights	13.20

Top Leisure Activities in Florida*	
Dining in Restaurants	95.90%
Shopping	95.70%
Amusement/Theme Parks	75.70%
Water Sports/Sunbathing	55.30%
Off-the-Beaten Path*** (Net)	43.80%
Heritage-Based*** (Net)	31.10%
Average number of activities	5

Average Expenditures in US. **	
<i>Britons Staying only in Florida</i>	87.40%
Per Travel Party/Trip	\$3,132
Per Visitor/Trip	\$1,091
Per Visitor/Day	\$77
<i>All British Visitors</i>	100.00%
Per Travel Party/Trip	\$3,132
Per Visitor/Trip	\$1,223
Per Visitor/Day	\$81

Accommodations*	
Hotel/Motel	76.20%
Private Home	32.50%
Other	3.30%

Activities of All Overseas Visitors in Florida, 2004	
Shopping	91.90%
Dining in Restaurants	85.70%
Amusement/Theme Parks	53.20%
Off-the-Beaten Path*** (net)	38.80%
<i>Visit small towns</i>	22.60%
<i>Touring Countryside</i>	15.50%
<i>Ranch Vacations</i>	0.70%
Water Sports/Sunbathing	38.00%
Heritage Based*** (net)	30.60%
<i>Visit Historical Places</i>	16.30%
<i>Cultural Heritage Sites</i>	10.10%
<i>Visit American Indian Community</i>	2.30%
<i>Ethnic Heritage Sites</i>	1.90%
Sightseeing in Cities	23.60%
Nature Based*** (net)	19.90%
<i>Visit National Parks</i>	13.40%
<i>Environmental/Ecological Excursions</i>	3.00%
<i>Hunting/Fishing</i>	3.00%
<i>Camping/Hiking</i>	0.50%
Culture-Based*** (net)	13.10%
<i>Art Gallery/Museum</i>	7.20%
<i>Concert/Play/Musical</i>	5.90%
Nightclubs/Dancing	12.80%
Guided Tours	9.60%
Golfing/Tennis	9.40%
Cruises	6.90%
Attend Sports Event	4.30%
Casinos/Gambling	3.00%
Total Person-Trips (in thousands)	4,430
Average Number of Activities	4.4

* Multiple Responses

** Expenditures in U.S. include airport expenditures

*** Defined by VISIT FLORIDA (small towns/museums etc)

Note: Some figures do not add up due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of commerce, ITA, Tourism Industries, VISIT FLORIDA.



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State Digest

If fresh Grouper is one of your favourite dishes, then the grouper on your plate will not be from Florida for the rest of the year. Fishermen in the Gulf, both commercial and recreational have reached limits set by the Federal Government for this year to protect the stocks. The imported Grouper could come from Mexico or Asia.

You could soon be hearing "have a nice day" in a very unexpected place. The Department for Motor Vehicles have started sending staff to Disney and Publix for training in customer service skills to help the licensing staff deal with Joe public.

A Federal Report has found that of 3.6 million people who overstayed their visas in the U.S., the Department of Homeland Security made only 671 apprehensions, from formal investigations of 4,164 leads. More than 301,000 leads were received.

Regional Roundup

The window of opportunity for the next shuttle launch is May 3rd to May 23rd and NASA officials are confident the Discovery will be ready in time.

Carnival Cruises have signed an agreement with French Chef George Blanc who has maintained 3 Michelin Stars for 25 years. His signature dishes will appear throughout the Carnival fleet and feature such delicacies as Bay Scallops in Truffle Butter and Cabernet cake with Basil Ice Cream.

Riders on Busch Gardens' SheiKra had a terrifying hour-long wait when the ride came to an abrupt halt on the horizontal platform just before the drop. A computer had detected an error in air compression and halted the ride. Passengers were removed one row at a time by a rescue trolley, and after 40 minutes of tests the coaster resumed activities.

A parcel of land in Osceola County has been sold to a developer from Delray Beach. The parcel is sited in the southeast corner of the county near Yeehaw Junction, 30 miles from the coast and has State Road 60 to its north, and Florida's Turnpike to its East. At 27,400 acres the buyers broker has outlined a new city with educational and governmental facilities and hospitals.

SeaWorld has unveiled plans for a new killer whale show at the Shamu stadium. Work has begun on dismantling the existing structures above water level, after which construction will begin on complex mechanical set pieces, the worlds largest whale tail, fountains and multi-media equipment. The new show, entitled "Believe" should be ready for Spring 2006. SeaWorld Orlando has also announced plans to add three new children's attractions in Shamu's Happy Harbor to encourage families to revisit regularly. The rides feature a roller coaster, a tower ride with a jellyfish theme and a tea-cup style beach bucket ride.

Have you ever wondered where the inspiration comes for the names engraved on windows above the stores along and around Main Street, Magic Kingdom? It is where Disney honours its cast members and other VIPs who help make the magic. The professions attributed to the name are usually relevant to the person, even if slightly obscurely.

The Villages has welcomed an Outback Steakhouse at 710 N, Hwy 411, featuring the all-new signature décor.

In a recent vote by readers of "Theme Park Insider" Walt Disney World managed only two entries in the top ten for attractions, at number 6 was *Splash Mountain* and at number ten was the *Twilight Zone Tower of Terror*. Number one was *The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man* at Islands of Adventure.

Roxy's Bar and Grille, a landmark dining spot in West Palm Beach for 29 years has been sold and shut down. Also closing its doors is Vittorio's Italian restaurant, a 36-year resident of Delray Beach.

MoneyCorp Dollar Update: 24/10/04

The week opened and closed with re-runs of the US interest rate debate. For the first two days the talk was of the federal funds rate topping out at 4.25pc or 4.5pc next year. The Dollar moved ahead simply because of this upgrade in expectations. Sterling's performance against the Dollar over the next few days will depend to a large extent on the fortunes of the Euro. If the Euro can resist repeated efforts to push it below \$1.19 the Pound should be able to cling onto its position against the Dollar. Otherwise it will have to hope for the best when chart support at \$1.76 is tested. Although there is not too much volatility forecast in the short term Sterling / Dollar exchange rate, buyers of the US currency should still look to protect themselves from any unexpected Sterling weakness.

Pensacola Climate Data - November 1948- 2000

(All in degrees Fahrenheit)

The average high temp is 69.9°
The average low temp is 50.2°
The highest temp (on November 2nd 1959) 87°
The coldest night temp (on November 25th 1950) 22°

Mortgage Rates

With zero points	Aug 26	Sep 26	Oct 26
Fixed 30 yrs	5.62%	6.00%	6.10%
Adjustable 1 yr	4.12%	4.25%	4.25%

Note: Mortgage rates are published as a service to readers to indicate trends and must not be relied on in entering into any agreement.

Average Daily Hotel Room Rate

Area	September	October
International Drive	\$96.57	\$110.40
Lake Buena Vista	\$101.66	\$123.69
Kissimmee East	\$83.44	\$73.04
Kissimmee West	\$45.42	\$51.20

Florida Lottery Winning Numbers

Date	Numbers	Winners	Jackpot \$m
10/15/05	06-11-16-24-40-52	Roll	\$21 m
10/12/05	17-22-25-30-43-52	Roll	\$16 m
10/08/05	13-20-22-30-39-48	Roll	\$12 m
10/05/05	14-19-28-31-36-40	Roll	\$9 m
10/01/05	05-15-29-38-45-49	Roll	\$6 m
09/28/05	17-18-25-36-39-45	Roll	\$3 m
09/24/05	09-11-18-27-38-39	2	\$12 m
09/21/05	16-30-35-38-44-53	Roll	\$9 m

Numbers are obtained from the Florida Lottery (www.flalottery.com) as a service to readers. We cannot accept liability for any errors.



Homes

An ongoing lawsuit between Osceola County and The Florida Home Builders Association and the Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando regarding the calculation of school impact fees has finally been settled after 18 months. A county circuit court judge ruled that the fee should be reduced from \$9,708 to \$7,608. The judge faulted Osceola County for forcing new developers to pay the full impact of new development as well as existing students and five years worth of maintenance. The county has held the money raised from the increased impact fee in an escrow account since May 2004, a portion of that money will now have to be reimbursed to builders, and through them to homeowners who have paid the full amount. Builders from Polk County may soon file a similar lawsuit because of the increase of school impact fees there from \$1,607 to \$8,596 as reported here last month.

Wal-Mart has opened its first "in-house Doctor" scheme at a SuperCenter on East Colonial Drive in Orange County. The walk in clinic is open 9am –9pm and unlike other in-store walk in clinics is fully staffed around the clock with a Doctor. A similar clinic is scheduled to open in a Kissimmee Walmart during November.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have raised fees across the board for applications and petitions for immigration. An average of \$10 per fee has been applied from October 26th.

Storms in the Gulf knocking out oil production together with global rises in the cost of oil has resulted in Florida's utility companies asking for permission to pass on even higher fuel charges than were asked for in September. Under Florida Law, power companies can directly pass along the fuel increases, as they make no profit from the cost of fuel. If the cost of oil recedes then the prices will be reduced accordingly. Crude oil cost \$12.34 per barrel in 1999, it is estimated to cost \$65.05 per barrel for August to December 2005. Gas prices have also been affected. In 1999 1 million BTU's of natural gas cost \$1.69. The estimated cost of 1 million BTU's for August to December 2005 is \$10.55. The Energy Department has said that consumers can expect to pay an increase of 32% for oil heating and 48% for gas heating this winter, over last year. However, Florida Power and Light and Progress Energy have confined their requested increases to 16% and 12% respectively at this time.

Residents in Sarasota County may soon receive pictures of themselves running a red light through the mail. This is part of an experiment to devise a system that shows only the car, and not the interior (to assuage privacy issues) and also to see how much of a problem there is for motorists running red lights.

Construction has begun on Treasure Cove, a 156 unit short-term-rental community on International Drive near SeaWorld Orlando.

Do you know how to dispose of difficult waste items such as paint, batteries or electronic items? www.florida.earth911.org has the answer for you, telling you where to find your closest landfill site or recycling site for items such as ink and toner cartridges, NiCd batteries etc.

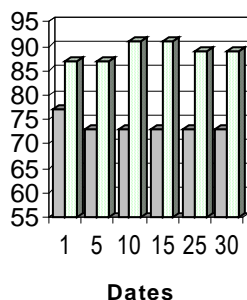
The Bee Line (proper name: The Martin Anderson Bee Line) that runs from Orlando to Cocoa Beach on the East Coast has now been officially renamed the Martin Anderson Beachline Expressway after a long campaign. Orange County has also renamed a section of the State Road 429 Western Expressway between Apopka and Ocoee as the Daniel Webster Western Beltway.

A useful website for those awaiting visitors at Florida airports is www.flightarrivals.com. This is a real-time tracking system allowing one to check the status of specific airline departures and arrivals worldwide. Weather delays can be checked as well as the general flight delay status of 46 major U.S. airports.

Legislation, which brings drilling for oil and gas closer to Florida's shores, is passing smoothly through the U.S. House of Representatives. Under legislation, if passed, a 125-mile exclusion zone will exist around Florida's coastline forever. The current Presidential and Federal Moratoriums on drilling within 300 miles expire in 2007 & 2012. Governor Bush backs the new legislation and unsurprisingly (for an Official State Body) Visit Florida has issued a statement on the subject supporting Governor Bush. However, the two State Senators, Senator Mel Martinez (Republican) and Senator Bill Nelson (Democrat) are totally against the bill.

The community of Celebration is 10 years old. The return to Main St style towns of the pre-1940's envisioned by Disney executives and "thinkers" has been largely successful. Over 5000 people attended a lottery in 1995 for the privilege of being one of the first to own a home in Celebration. The first 350 families moved in during 1996, nine years later over 10,000 residents call Celebration home. One of the less successful intentions was to make the community economically diverse. A failure to set aside affordable housing has meant that the cheapest property available recently was a one bedroom townhouse for \$195,000. The median household income in Celebration is \$87,000, compared with \$38,000 in surrounding Osceola County. Disney has now withdrawn from ownership, with all the land and assets sold on, and only one Disney executive remains on the Homeowners Association Board – as of next year there will be none. Disney had always planned that the community would be self contained, and in fact there are now talks of incorporation for Celebration. Despite variations from the original vision, Celebration is regarded as a success, and master community planners come from around the world to see if they can discover the secret for themselves.

Orlando - September High/Low Temperatures





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Insurance

Tom Gallagher, Florida's Chief Financial Officer, announced a ten-member committee on 4th October, tasked with developing a standard homeowners insurance policy for Floridians that is both easy to understand and offers comprehensive coverage. State lawmakers called for the committee in response to Gallagher's concern that many victims of the 2004 hurricanes were not adequately protected because they either did not understand the complex language in their insurance policies or had not updated their policy limits to keep pace with increasing property values. The new law, passed by state lawmakers in the 2005 session, required Gallagher to appoint an advisory committee that includes two members recommended by Insurance Commissioner Kevin McCarty, two appointees from the residential property insurance industry, two property insurance agents, two consumers and Florida's Insurance Consumer Advocate. The committee must issue its recommendation to the Legislature by January 15, 2006.

Insurance Commissioner Kevin McCarty has disapproved rate increase requests from Allstate Floridian Insurance Company and Allstate Floridian Indemnity Company. An independent review by the Consumer Advocate's Office in August of Allstate's requests on the heels of dropping 95,000 of their policyholders revealed that the companies' rate requests were unjustified. The independent review, conducted by the Consumer Advocate's Office, was published in August and forwarded to the Insurance Commissioner's Office. The review revealed that these Florida-only companies were attempting to justify their rates based on losses from other states and had not adequately documented how the reduction of 95,000 policyholders was factored in their rates.

Hurricane Wilma may be the straw that broke the camel's back for many Florida based insurance companies. After the devastating losses of 2004, many companies have all but used up their hurricane reserves built up over preceding years. Particularly at risk are companies that have assumed high-risk properties from Citizens Insurance, properties concentrated in South Florida. Hurricane Wilma is estimated to have caused insured losses of \$12 billion – one of the costliest storms to the U.S. All homeowners in Florida will pay a 6.8% surcharge in 2006 to help restore Citizens Insurance to the Black, after \$1.8 billion was paid out for wind damage in 2004.

10 Most Expensive States For Homeowner Insurance - 2004

1. Texas	\$1,238
2. Louisiana	\$840
3. Oklahoma	\$800
4. Florida	\$786
5. District of Columbia	\$697
6. Kansas	\$684
7. Mississippi	\$668
8. Alaska	\$668
9. New York	\$661
10. Colorado	\$660

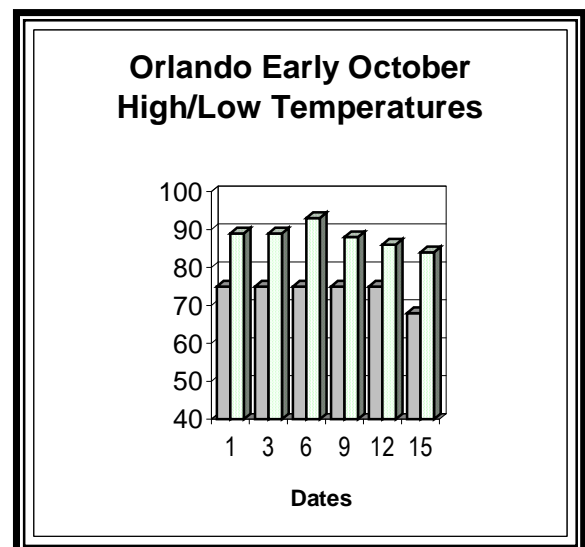
Compiled by the National Association of Insurance commissioners.

Hurricane Season

After sitting for what seemed like days on top of Cancun Hurricane Wilma fairly whipped across Florida, clearing the peninsula in a matter of hours. Central Florida was hardly affected; attractions were open by late morning or lunchtime and tourists carried on with their vacations. The only exception there was Animal Kingdom, which delayed opening until Tuesday, to give the animals time to get back to enclosures from safe houses and reduce stress. In South Florida the picture was very different. Wilma hit 30 miles south of Naples as a Category 3 storm and left Broward County as a Category 2 storm. Fourteen people have reportedly died; a little fishing village in the Everglades with a population of around 1,000 was completely submerged. A lot of damage was reportedly cosmetic rather than catastrophic, but even in large buildings built to the strictest codes, windows were still shattered. Aeroplanes were upturned, and roofs were ripped off. However, infrastructure and the economy were not damaged and experts predict that South Florida will bounce back. About 6 million homes were without power according to some reports, with power outages expected to last up to four weeks in some places. Some 2000 flights were cancelled at the three largest South Florida airports causing chaos for several days for hundreds of thousands of passengers. President Bush came to see for himself the damage caused to the state, giving himself a welcome break from the headlines in Washington. Tropical Storm Alpha was formed on 22nd October, breaking all the records for numbers of storms in a season, and dallied about over Puerto Rico and Haiti before being swallowed up by Wilma. Hurricane Beta formed on the 26th October also in the Caribbean Sea off the coast of Nicaragua. Beta is expected to strengthen to a Category 2 storm before heading inland over Central America as a Tropical Depression.

Contacts in this issue:

- Waste Disposal www.florida.earth911.org
- Flight arrivals www.flightarrivals.com
- Hurricane paths www.wesh.com
- Green Card Lottery www.dvlottery.state.gov





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The Hard Truth

When we finally complete on our dream purchase of a beautiful vacation property in Florida, it is for many, the culmination of months or years of dreaming, saving, calculating, worry, and excitement to name but a few. For an average owner, purchasing one home, the aim usually to provide a place for family holidays whilst at the same time obtaining rentals to cover costs, possibly even making a small profit. It may even cross the mind that enough profit could be made to finance another house! But what about reality? Can it really be made to pay? Using average figures taken from this years Annual Property Management Survey we have created an illustrative set of profit and loss accounts for an hypothetical 4 bedroom property (because on average, most subscribers have 4 bedroom properties) with its own pool, on an imaginary subdivision in Osceola County. As stated, all figures (including rental rates and weeks) were the averages for this type of property as shown in the Survey, or have been supplied as "reasonable averages" by experts within each industry.

Incoming	Item	Outgoing
	Mortgage @ 5.75%	\$15,686.40
	Electricity	\$2,305.92
	Water	\$833.16
	Phone	\$438.84
	Man Co Service Fees	\$3,211.00
	Cleaning**	\$1,215.88
	Fire Extinguisher check	\$20.00
	Homeowner Association	\$771.54
	Homeowner Insurance	\$800.00
	Hotel/Motel Licence	\$121.00
	Occupational Licence	\$30.00
	Property Tax	\$2,500.00
	Tangible Tax	\$500.00
	Accountant Fees***	\$221.00
	Maintenance/Upgrades	\$150.00
\$27,492	Rental Income*	
	Tourist Tax	\$838.00
	Sales Tax	\$978.00
\$27,492	Total	\$30,620.74

* Rental Income = average weekly rental (£490.07) rate multiplied by average number of weeks achieved (33).

**Ave British vacation period is 13 nights.

***Fees for filing accounts, not book-keeping

Rate of Exchange used; £1=\$1.7

In order to "break even" over the year on this fictional property, we would need to see 36.75 rental weeks achieved, or the rental rate charged would need to be increased to £545.82 per week. A very careful balance must be struck between achieving rentals, and keeping a reflective price and preventing wear and tear on the house, which of course, increases maintenance costs. By co-incidence, whilst researching this article I was contacted by subscribers with the following idea.

Is Diversification An Answer?

As the pool of rental homes increases and vacationers wake up to idea of direct renting from homeowners, the achievability of respectable rental rates gets harder. Two subscribers who recognised the problem and worked hard to get around this, came together and believe they may have found an answer. Outlined below is Graham Hardy and Mark Pagdin's idea:

Is there an alternative to making money in the Florida real estate market? www.floridahomesonly.com thinks there are some owners now starting to question the short-term rental scenario and instead think about diversifying their property portfolio. This is where the LONG TERM rental comes in. It's a completely different ball game, but the return on the investment through capital appreciation and positive cash flow can be considerably more attractive than the short term rental market, the running costs are considerably lower, and so are stress levels.

Consider the following on a long-term rental:

- No utility bills to pay – guest pays them all
- Rental income from day one (and in some cases for up to a year) – Immediate positive cash flow
- Homes are cheaper to purchase – Less money needed for a deposit
- Maintenance as and when needed – no monthly retainer management fees
- No sales and tourist tax to pay on rental income – lower running costs
- No need for a short term rental licence – lower running costs
- Portfolio diversification – better potential for capital growth
- If selling a short term rental home – No capital gains tax to pay if you use 1031 exchange
- Reduced marketing costs – Lower running costs
- No need to find guests – significantly more time for yourself
- Positive cash flow – ALL costs are MORE than covered

Other considerations are Inheritance tax planning. Did you know that US citizens have a \$1.5m tax-free allowance and non US citizens have just \$60K? So expert advice in this area is of paramount importance, but often overlooked.

A good balance is to have a portfolio in both the short term and long term rental market, but if you are planning on selling a short term rental home and think that it is best to keep the money working for you in the US then consider a 1031 exchange. This allows you to not pay any capital gains tax on any profit from the sale if you re invest it in the long-term rental market.

We have both short-term and long-term rentals ourselves so we have experience of the do's and don'ts. Why not take advantage and contact us today - it costs you nothing, but could save you a lot?

To find out more about how you can take advantage of the Real Estate market in Florida and our full service offerings that are unique in this market please contact us at one of the following locations

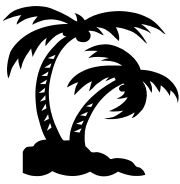
UK: Graham Hardy graham@floridahomesonly.com

Tel 01252 687937

US: Mark Pagdin mark@floridahomesonly.com

Tel 407 397 4863

Visit the website at www.floridahomesonly.com



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Florida To New England (part 2)

After leaving Mystic, Connecticut on Friday 23rd September we drove to Newport, Rhode Island. We explored the old wharves lining the harbour, which are now full of restaurants, boutiques and gift stores, before driving to the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum at the historic Newport Casino building. Then we continued on to Hyannis on Cape Cod.

Hyannis is the centre of things on Cape Cod and has a picturesque Main Street and harbour. On the Saturday we had an enjoyable walk around Hyannis harbour and sat for a while watching the boating activity. Then we set off to explore Hwy. 6A, voted one of the 10 Most Scenic Byways in America by Scenic America. Sorry but we feel it is nothing special. We were curious to see a Cranberry Bog and were told where to find one. It just looked like a bit of scrubby marshland. We had passed many on our tour and not realised! On Sunday we took the ferry to Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard. Oak Bluffs is a picture postcard New England port. We did a DIY Island tour by public transport. The bus runs along the coast road to Edgartown, the "capital" of the island. If we thought Oak Bluffs looked picturesque then Edgartown was even more so. After a meander around the town, including lunch and admiring the famous Old Whaling Church, we caught the bus to Vineyard Haven. This is the smallest of the three towns and after exploring it for a while we caught the bus back to Oak Bluffs. The back streets of Oak Bluffs have some really twee cottages around a village green. Martha's Vineyard is indeed a beautiful island.

On Monday we visited the Cape Cod Potato Chip factory in Hyannis before we hit the road and headed to Plymouth to see the famous rock and the replica of the Mayflower. We had decided to skip Boston on the way north and see it on the way back, so that night we stayed in Haverhill and drove to Marblehead for dinner on the waterfront.

We drove up the coast of New Hampshire on Tuesday, stopping for lunch in Portsmouth before continuing into Maine. In New Hampshire the coast is flat with sand dunes and marshes. On entering Maine we were instantly in rolling, winding, wooded country with pretty looking coves. Ogunquit is a stunningly beautiful cove and small resort town. Kennebunkport is also an attractive looking resort but obviously more expensive, maybe because the Bush family's summer home is there. That night we stayed in Portland.

On Wednesday our first stop was Boothbay Harbor, but while picturesque it didn't grab us. Camden however is a knock your socks off pretty place. It is known in Maine as where the mountains meet the sea. We explored the main

street and harbour area and decided to stay the night. On Thursday we set off for Bar Harbor, but not before back tracking a mile to drive to the top of Mount Battie to see the view across Penobscot Bay and Camden way below us. We then drove through tiny Lincolnville, which has one of the few sandy beaches in Maine and stopped in Belfast. Its Main Street buildings are built exclusively in brick rather than wood because fires claimed the previous wooden main street. Arriving early in Bar Harbor we had to find a laundrette before we could have dinner.

After an overnight gale it was sunny but only in the 40's on the Friday morning when we set off to explore the Acadia National Park and Mount Desert Island. We were somewhat underwhelmed by the famous 27-mile Scenic Loop Road and decided to drive down to Northeast Harbor, then head north to Somes Sound, the only fjord on the east coast of the USA before returning to Bar Harbor through the mountains. It proved to be a good decision. After lunch we explored the town of Bar Harbor itself and had dinner later. It has typical New England streets with pretty wooden clapboard buildings of varying styles, painted in contrasting colours.

Saturday we drove in a 307-mile loop, finishing only 50 or so miles north of Bar Harbor. Our goal was to drive to the Quoddy Head Lighthouse near Lubec, which is the eastern most point in the USA. Hwy. 1 took us along the coast through rolling wooded countryside offering glimpses of the Atlantic as we dipped down close to coves or across rivers. As we drove east the villages grew smaller. We saw lots of ankle high wild Blueberry bushes by the roadside. They are harvested in August and they look at first glance like low growing heather. We arrived at the lighthouse at noon and had a picnic lunch looking out at the Atlantic in one direction and Canada in the other. Then we drove to Calais, which is the first point at which you can cross Passamaquoddy Bay to Canada. Calais is a big town in these parts (population 3,447), witness it possesses a Wal-Mart! We then set off back on the inland route to Bangor, Maine. The highway climbs close by two mountains and there are only three hamlets in the first 70 or so miles. On reaching the Canadian border we had travelled 2,650 miles since leaving Port Richey 17 days earlier.

(Continued next month)

Christmas at Pinewood—Holiday Splendor

11th Annual Holiday Home Tour
Historic Bok Sanctuary
November 25-January 1

Enjoy resplendent holiday décor in a 1930s historic mansion. Its magnificent antique furnishings and architectural elements will be accentuated by the decorative designs of central Florida businesses. Holiday Home Tours: Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sun. 1-5 p.m. Sat., December 10 only, 5 to 9 p.m. enjoy the ambiance of Pinewood at night! \$15 adults, \$8 children 5-12, under 5 free, \$5 members; includes Sanctuary admission. Group rates available.



Florida Homes and Travel

November 2005

Comedy Criminals

This back page may have taken a break for a while, but the criminals with little brains don't stop their antics for anyone!

First up we have car thieves in Pensacola. Two men asked a gas station worker for a lift to Mississippi as he arrived for work. Unable to help them, he was a little surprised to see the two men back around an hour later in a blue 1994 Ford Escort to fill up with gas. But he was not as surprised as his colleague Pam Pease who had, an hour earlier, reported her 1994 Ford Escort as stolen. The male attendant offered water and switched off the car whilst Pease rang 911. The suspects fled on foot but were caught close by.

Next we have the Central Florida armoured-truck guard who knocked himself on the head and pretended to have been robbed! Under police questioning he later admitted stealing \$250,000, which was later, found in his car.

Then there was the best-dressed cowboy in Florida who was pictured robbing the People's First community Bank in Casselberry in September. He wore a sport coat, wide brimmed cowboy hat and scarf mask over his face featuring authentic cowboy stubble (a bit grey apparently) whilst wielding a shiny chrome pistol. The man vanished after leaving the bank and it is unclear if he drove away, walked away or saddled up and rode away!

The Animals Bite Back

Alligators and Pythons have been dominating the animal news over the last few weeks, but who would have thought that a fight between the two would make world news?

Pictures of a 13 foot Burmese Python that had apparently exploded whilst attempting to swallow a

6 foot alligator whole quickly became the most emailed picture around the world after scientists discovered the remains in early October in the Everglades National Park.

Burmese Pythons are not native to Florida but have been establishing a population over the last 20 years as owners release them when they grow too big. There are enough now in the wild that they are breeding. A 12-foot Burmese Python has recently been blamed for the disappearance of a family Siamese cat when it was spotted in the garden with a large cat-sized bulge. An African Rock Python was found to be guilty when a turkey went missing at a nursery in Miami. The bulge in the python meant it could not slither back through the fence and was trapped with the evidence. Another 10 foot Burmese Python was found just last week in a backyard pond that just happened to contain exotic fish! The owner leapt to their defence and suffered bites as he wrestled the creature into a pillowcase.

Poultry must be on the menu for predators, although one would have assumed that alligators would generally prefer a plain fresh chicken to the cooked spicy one that was stolen from a family picnic on the side of Lake Alice at the University of Florida Campus. A party of two women and their children were horrified when a 6 – 8 foot long alligator rushed out of the water, took the chicken and then came back for more!

Not content to let modern day creatures grab all the headlines the prehistorics have fought back:

Construction workers on the gulf coast were surprised when they unearthed fossilized bones whilst trying to lay sewer pipes. They found 2 6-foot tusks; several shoe sized teeth, a 5-foot thighbone, a jawbone and other bone pieces. Officials at the South Florida Museum believe the bones were from a 10,000-pound Columbian mammoth that roamed prehistoric Florida.

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BAKEHOUSE COTTAGE, FERNHURST ROAD, MILLAND, LIPHOOK, HANTS, GU30 7LU, UK

fhandt@btopenworld.com

www.floridahomesandtravel.com

Tel: 0500 50 50 87. Or: 01428 741438

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Newsletter for Vacation Home Owners Flights Car Hire





Florida Homes And Travel

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0500 50 50 87
fhandt@btopenworld.com

Below is a small selection of flights available as of 30th October. Flight prices change all the time so please contact us by phone or email with your requirements for rates and availability and we will do the hard work for you. All prices include pre-payable airport taxes, security and air passenger charges.

Date	Airport	Carrier	Price
03/12/05 – 14 nights	Gatwick – Sanford	First Choice – Charter	£228
04/12/05	Heathrow – Orlando	United	£408
06/12/05	Gatwick – Orlando	US Airways	£361
Christmas	Gatwick – Orlando	British Airways	£551
07/01/06 – 14 nights	Gatwick – Sanford	First Choice – Charter	£259
23/01/06	Heathrow – Orlando	United	£375
23/01/06	Manchester – Miami	US Airways	£350
04/02/06 – 14 nights	Gatwick – Sanford	First Choice – Charter	£482
10/03/06	Gatwick – Orlando	British Airways	£522
Easter	Gatwick – Orlando	US Airways	£476
05/06/06	Manchester – Orlando	Virgin	£743

First Choice Airlines have upgraded their long haul fleet to a 33-inch seat pitch and 7-inch seat back television for all passengers.

Fly Drive Deals Available: For example, 2 passengers 03/12/05 – 17/12/05 Gatwick to Sanford plus 2 weeks All Inclusive Economy 2 door car hire: Total price £282 per person based on two passengers travelling.



Car Type	Week	Day	Car Type	Week	Day
Economy 2 Door	£114	£27	Convertible 2 Door	£184	£41
Compact 2 Door	£120	£29	Luxury 7 Seater	£184	£41
Intermediate 2 Door	£134	£31	4 Wheel Drive	£184	£44
Full Size 2 Door	£149	£33	Minivan 8 Seater	£204	£45
Premium 4 Door	£174	£38	Chevy Silverado -		
Luxury 4 Door	£184	£41	Pick up – 6 Seats	£133	£30

Prices Shown are Alamo All Inclusive Cover: CDW, EP, Sales & State Tax, Airport Fees, One Driver, Third Party, Unlimited Mileage.

Dollar, USave and Hertz cars also available - please ask for a quote

E Hubbard T/As Florida Homes and Travel
BAKEHOUSE COTTAGE, FERNHURST ROAD, MILLAND, LIPHOOK, HANTS, GU30 7LU, UK

fhandt@btopenworld.com
TEL/FAX: 01428 741438

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Newsletter for Vacation Homeowners

Flights

Car hire



November Market Place

Fly Drives

15th December for 14 nights, Gatwick to Orlando with British Airways and 2 weeks All-Inclusive hire of a Luxury 7 Seater Car. Total price £585 per person, based on 2 adults and 2 children.

10th January 2006 for 14 nights, Manchester to Orlando with U.S. Airways and 2 weeks All-Inclusive hire of an Intermediate 4 Door Car. Total price £375 per person, based on 2 adults and 2 children.

February 10th 2006 for 14 nights, Gatwick to Orlando with Delta Airlines and 2 weeks All-Inclusive hire of a Luxury 7 Seater Car, Total price £450 per person, based on 2 adults and 2 children.

March 18th 2006 for 14 nights, Gatwick to Sanford with First Choice *33-inch seat pitch* and 2 weeks All-Inclusive hire of a Compact 4 Door Car. Total price £478 per person, based on 2 adults and 2 children.

March 25th 2006 for 14 nights, Gatwick to Miami with U.S. Airways and 2 weeks All-Inclusive hire of a Full Size 4 Door Car. Total price £428 per person based on 2 adults and 2 children.

Please call or email Elle on 0500 50 50 87 or fhandt@btopenworld.com for more details.

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Why you should think carefully before buying a property to rent out.



Intensive advertising in the UK has contributed to an influx of Brits buying property in Orlando, who are dependant on rental income to cover their mortgage payments. It is worth looking at other options such as Sarasota and Naples on the Gulf Coast where a Gulf Coast lifestyle and less competition....*article continues on web*

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